

# New U.S. initiative on arms is unlikely

By Charles W. Corddry  
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Washington — Despite pressure from allies abroad and some Republican leaders at home, President Reagan is unlikely to make any new proposal on European missile limitations during the current round of negotiations with the Soviet Union in Geneva.

Those advocating a quick initiative — notably including the newly elected West German government —

limited" numbers of such weapons in Soviet Asia and get rid of U.S. aircraft that can carry nuclear weapons from European bases. He said it is up to the Soviets to make a proposal that takes into account Western security concerns.

That still is the official position. But the administration appears to have loosened it enough to let it ease into a modified stance after the current round in Geneva, if that was judged wiser or unavoidable in light of allies' pressure.

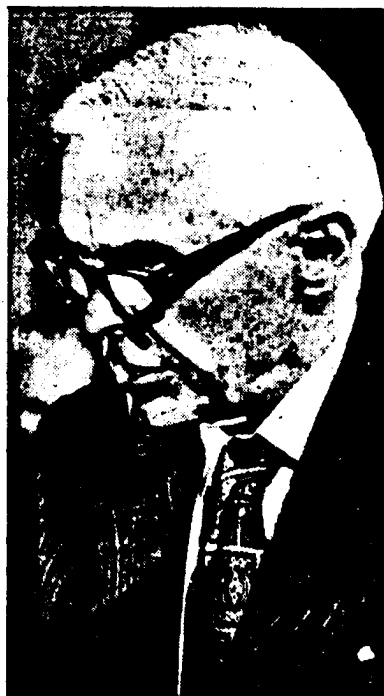
State Department spokesman Alan Romberg reaffirmed yesterday the U.S. willingness to consider solutions that meet the criteria of equal missile limits, verifiability of adherence to agreements, no counting of other countries' (meaning Britain's and France's) missiles and no Soviet transfer of the threat to Asia by moving its SS-20s there.

In regard to allies' pressure, West Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl has reaffirmed support for missile deployments if no agreement is reached to prevent them, but he has said he is looking for new U.S. proposals in the "near future." Italian Foreign Minister Emilio Colombo similarly endorsed the zero option here last week but called for consideration of "less radical formulas." Italy has agreed to accept cruise missiles.

One official who resists any quick departure from the zero formula said Washington recognizes that European leaders "want to alter the political climate." But he contended that Washington "gets blank stares" when it asks what alternative position "would better strengthen our position." If one can be proposed, he said, "so be it."

Officials here have been struck by what they consider an ironical position in Western Europe. In order to head off domestic political opposition to new missiles, especially in West Germany, the United States is being urged to bring forth a compromise that would be some sort of interim "zero-plus" option. In other words, instead of no missiles at all, the proposal should be to deploy some.

The European view, though, is that the public must be convincingly shown that Russia's obduracy left no choice.



Associated Press

PAUL H. NITZE  
... "the same sour wine"

THE SUN, Tuesday, March 15, 1983

## Analysis

have a chief purpose of making it clear that Soviet intransigence, not American, will be responsible for any new U.S. missile deployments in Western Europe this year.

The White House, however, is described by several government sources as being persuaded that there still is more mileage to be gained in negotiations with Moscow by sticking with the proposed "zero option."

Under this option, the Soviets would dismantle all their medium range SS-20 and other missiles in return for America's forgoing any deployment of Pershing 2 ballistic missiles and winged cruise missiles in Western Europe.

The Reagan administration, still split at levels below the White House on how far to go in negotiations, therefore is unlikely to yield to immediate pressures after weighing tactics for dealing with both Moscow and allies.

A number of officials in the agencies involved agreed on this point yesterday, and the White House spokesman, Larry Speakes, essentially bore it out.

"I don't look for a formal U.S. proposal," he said, before U.S. negotiator Paul H. Nitze concludes the current round of talks at the end of the month.

Mr. Nitze told an international conference in Munich last month that Soviet proposals — including one in December by Soviet leader Yuri V. Andropov that got much attention — were attempts to "sell us the same sour wine in a slightly different bottle."

The Soviet aim remained, he said, to keep out U.S. medium-range missiles, retain a large number of SS-20s pointed at Western Europe, keep "un-

# Administration Considers Proposal To Break Arms-Negotiation Deadlock

By Lou Cannon  
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Reagan administration is giving "serious consideration" to offering a proposal designed to break the deadlock in U.S.-Soviet negotiations on reducing intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe, White House officials said yesterday.

One White House official said such a proposal, calling for an interim agreement allowing both sides to deploy a limited number of missiles in Europe until they are banned there, might be placed before President Reagan as early as next week.

Another said that it was "conceivable" that the proposal, if approved by Reagan, could be ready for submission to the Soviets before the current round of negotiations in Geneva recesses March 28.

The officials stressed that because details of such a proposal have yet to be worked out presidential consideration of it could be delayed until after the Geneva talks recess.

But they said it is likely that a new U.S. proposal will be made eventually. Faced with calls from foreign leaders and U.S. politicians for an interim agreement, the Reagan administration is anxious to demonstrate that it is willing to negotiate a genuine reduction in arms with the Soviets.

Reagan's original "zero-zero" plan, which the Soviets have rejected, would require the Soviets to dismantle their arsenal of more than 600 medium-range nuclear missiles targeted on western Europe in return for U.S. agreement not to deploy 572 Pershing II and Cruise missiles in five European countries, beginning December in West Germany.

West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Italian Foreign Minister Emilio Colombo, while approving the Reagan administration's goal, have urged the United States to make the first move toward trying to achieve an interim agreement for

deployment of fewer missiles on both sides.

Adding to this pressure on the administration, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Charles H. Percy (R-Ill.) said recently that "There is no point in letting the Soviets score a propaganda coup by being the first to move away from their current negotiating position."

Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger, who had vigorously opposed any compromise of the administration's negotiation position, said in a news conference last week and again in a television interview Sunday that the United States now might consider an interim agreement if the Soviets agreed to continue negotiating a ban on all U.S. and Soviet nuclear missiles in Europe.

Administration officials also emphasized yesterday that any interim agreement should be considered only a step toward reaching that goal.

But there is disagreement within the administration over whether the Soviets would respond seriously to a new U.S. proposal.

One administration official said that, whatever the U.S. proposal contains, "the Soviets are likely to reject it."

Another official said he believed the Soviets would negotiate seriously, but only after deployment of the first U.S. missiles in West Germany.

However, the officials acknowledged that even the friendly Kohl government would find it politically difficult to begin deployment if the United States failed to demonstrate flexibility in its negotiating position at Geneva.

By declaring a willingness to be flexible, the Reagan administration had hoped to force the Soviets to make the first promising counterproposal at Geneva.

But during the recent West German election campaign, both Kohl and his Social Democratic opponent, Hans-Jochen Vogel, suggested that Washington instead make a new proposal after the March 6 elections.

After Kohl's decisive victory, U.S. officials acknowledged, his call for a U.S. proposal of an interim agreement at Geneva created a perception in Europe that such a plan would be forthcoming.

Administration officials said yesterday, however, that a new U.S. proposal would not rule out deployment of Pershing II missiles, which could strike the Soviet Union from West German bases much more rapidly than could Cruise missiles.

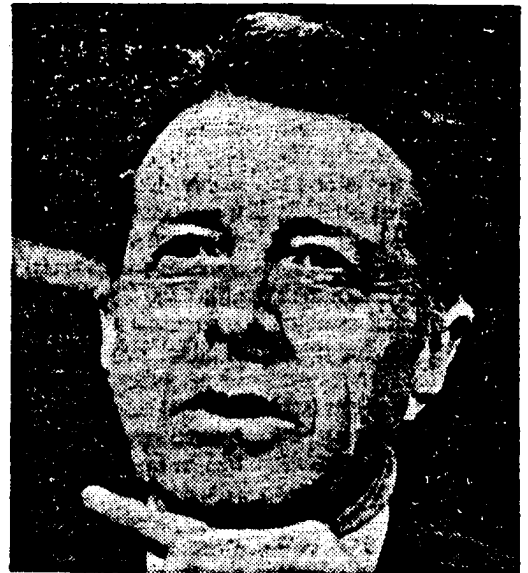
Any new proposal would include some Pershings among the reduced number of U.S. missiles to be deployed in Europe under an interim agreement, the officials said.

On the record yesterday, the White House would only reiterate what Reagan said in a Feb. 24 speech to the American Legion, in which he

opened the door for the possibility of an interim agreement while insisting that his zero-zero proposal held the "moral high ground" of the arms-control debate.

Asked at the daily White House briefing about this, presidential spokesman Larry Speakes repeated that the European allies support the president's goal of eliminating intermediate-range nuclear weapons from Europe.

"If there are ideas that will help us to achieve that goal, we would certainly consider them," Speakes said. "... As the president has said, we do not have a 'take-it-or-leave it' approach."



Weinberger no longer opposes negotiating compromise